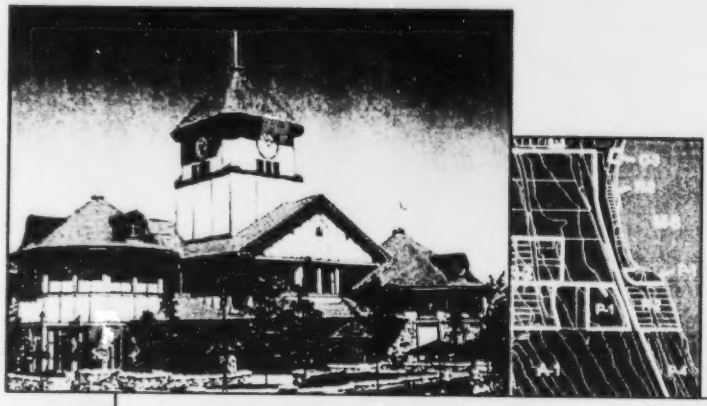
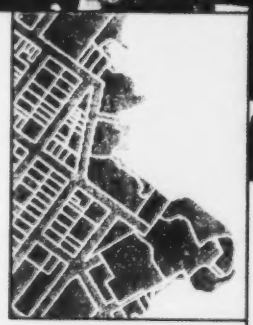


MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

1999|2000

ANNUAL REPORT



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Letters of Transmittal

October 2000

The Honourable Garde B. Gardom
Lieutenant-Governor
Province of British Columbia

I have the honour of submitting to you the annual report of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for 1999/00.

This report outlines the ministry's activities from April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000 and is an accurate account of achievements during that time.

Honourable Cathy McGregor
MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

The Honourable
Cathy McGregor
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Dear Minister,

I respectfully submit the annual report of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, which describes the ministry's activities from April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000.

Suzanne Veit
DEPUTY MINISTER

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Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the *1999/2000 Annual Report* for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The ministry continued to work this year with the people of British Columbia to build healthy, sustainable, safe communities for B.C. families. I am confident that the ministry's successes will continue to benefit our growing communities throughout the province.

This annual report achieves two objectives: it describes what the ministry does, reporting on our major achievements for the year, and it serves as an accountability document, one of many efforts to fulfil our commitment to be accountable to the people of British Columbia.

Leading the ministry's achievements in 1999/00 was our continuing work on *Municipal Act* reform, which is broadening the powers and responsibilities of local governments, enabling them to be more responsive to their communities. Our ongoing partnership with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities is critical to the success of this process, and I look forward to continued, meaningful discussions with the Union of B.C. Municipalities on these and other issues.

In preparation for introduction of new safety legislation, the ministry continued to consult with stakeholders and began drafting the proposed new *Safety Standards Regulation Act*. The objective of this new legislation is to strengthen and modernize B.C.'s safety system.

Other important ministry achievements during this year included:

- Putting in place a new program of infrastructure funding that supports local water quality and sewer projects, protecting human and environmental health.
- Working with B.C. public libraries to continue a broad range of programs that promote reading and learning for children, and to increase public access to the Internet.
- Continuing our commitment to help build sustainable communities in the Peace River region by providing $11.5 million this year through the Fair Share Program.
- Launching the first certification program for the B.C. fire service, which puts provincial training standards in place and recognizes the contributions and achievements of B.C. fire service personnel.
- Implementing new appeal management practices at the Property Assessment Appeal Board, significantly reducing the time it takes to resolve appeals.
- Drafting a strategic information technology plan to modernize the information systems in the Safety Engineering Services Division.

These initiatives are diverse, but they share a common purpose – to continually make B.C. the best possible place for families to live. I look forward to continuing this work with the dedicated and capable staff of Municipal Affairs, our many partners and clients, and all British Columbians.

Cathy McGregor

Honourable Cathy McGregor
MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Message from the Deputy Minister

The work of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is diverse, from administering the province's *Municipal Act* and helping expanding communities plan for regional growth, to inspecting boilers at industrial sites and supporting the work of B.C.'s public libraries. This report presents a summary of those activities and achievements from April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000.

With 450 employees, the ministry is relatively small, but this annual report conveys the often complex and sophisticated work we take on. This report is a reflection of a year of careful planning, hard work, cooperation and problem solving by ministry staff. Their experience, knowledge and effort on a daily basis contributes to the bigger picture of accomplishment, and I am very proud to relate their achievements.

The most prominent example of achievement during 1999/00 was the second year of a three-year process of *Municipal Act* reform. Legislative amendments to the *Act* give municipalities more autonomy, so they can focus on delivering quality services in a more cost-effective and straightforward manner.

Whether it's in the area of safety, community infrastructure or local government, the ministry continues to make a significant contribution to all B.C. communities, in cooperation with a network of local government and

ANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Top row from left:
e, Executive Coordinator;
Judy Brachman, Director,
nications; Brian Walisser,
rector, Corporate Policy;
ne Veit, Deputy Minister.
Sitting: Dale Wall, ADM,
nment; Lori Wanamaker,
ADM, Corporate Services.
Missing: Gary Harkness,
M, Safety and Standards.

community partners in towns, cities and regional districts throughout the province. This annual report records some of their collective contributions – electrical and railway inspectors, local government officials, civic planners, municipal advisors, firefighters and librarians – who work to keep these programs, changes and processes moving forward. They do so while maintaining for British Columbians the highest possible standards of safety and responsiveness to local community needs.

We will continue to report to you on our progress in the year ahead.

Suzanne Veit
DEPUTY MINISTER

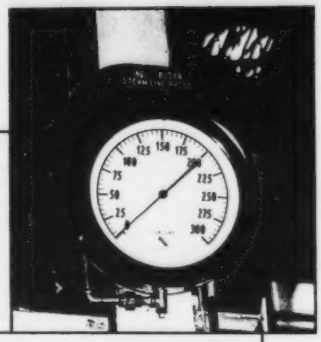


Table of contents

Message from the Minister i

Message from the Deputy Minister iii

Ministry Profile

Vision 2
Mission 2
Values and Principles 3
Ministry of Municipal Affairs Organization Chart, March 31, 2000 4
Map of Municipal Affairs Regional Offices 5

Ministry Activities

Introduction 6
Local Government 9
Community Services 20
Safety 26
Corporate Support 36

Appendices

1 Accountability Reports 42
Local Government 42
Community Services 47
Safety 49
Corporate Support 52

2 Expenditure Overview 54
1999/00 Expenditures by Business Line

3 Crown Corporations, Agencies, Boards and Commissions Reporting to the Minister of Municipal Affairs 55

4 Legislation Administered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs 56

Ministry Profile

From Left: Bryan Green, Jeri Cova
Linda Galeazzi and Dave Blake fro
the Local Government Structu
Branch along with Gary Pag
Executive Director, Planning a
Governance Divisio

◄ Anita Fownes, Research and Consultation Assistant, Corporate Policy Branch

VISION

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs will work with the people of British Columbia to create and sustain the kinds of local and regional communities in which they wish to live – communities that are strong, safe, well-planned and effectively administered.

MISSION

Working in partnership with communities and other ministries, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs provides leadership, support and service for:

- the safety of elevating devices, gas equipment and installations, boilers, electrical equipment and installations, aerial tramways, and amusement rides, provincial railways and refrigeration plants,
- the development and maintenance of a legal framework for public safety,
- fire safety,
- the development and maintenance of a public and legislative framework for local government,
- regional growth strategies,
- local government structure,
- overseeing municipal finances,
- the administration of grant programs to local governments,
- the public library system,
- the property assessment system,
- homeowner grant administration,
- administration of the University Endowment Lands, and
- effective management of the ministry.

Legislation administered by the ministry is listed in Appendix 4.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

We believe in maintaining a work environment that recognizes excellence, encourages innovation, inspires job satisfaction and reflects the population of British Columbia. The following principles guide ministry work:

Partnership
We believe that effective cooperation among all levels of government, the private sector, community groups and others is the best way to address common challenges. Partnerships help guide government performance, make better use of resources and promote public confidence.

Clearly defined responsibilities
We believe that clearly defining responsibilities will make provincial and local governments more effective and affordable.

Accountability
We believe that provincial and local governments must be accountable to the people they serve.

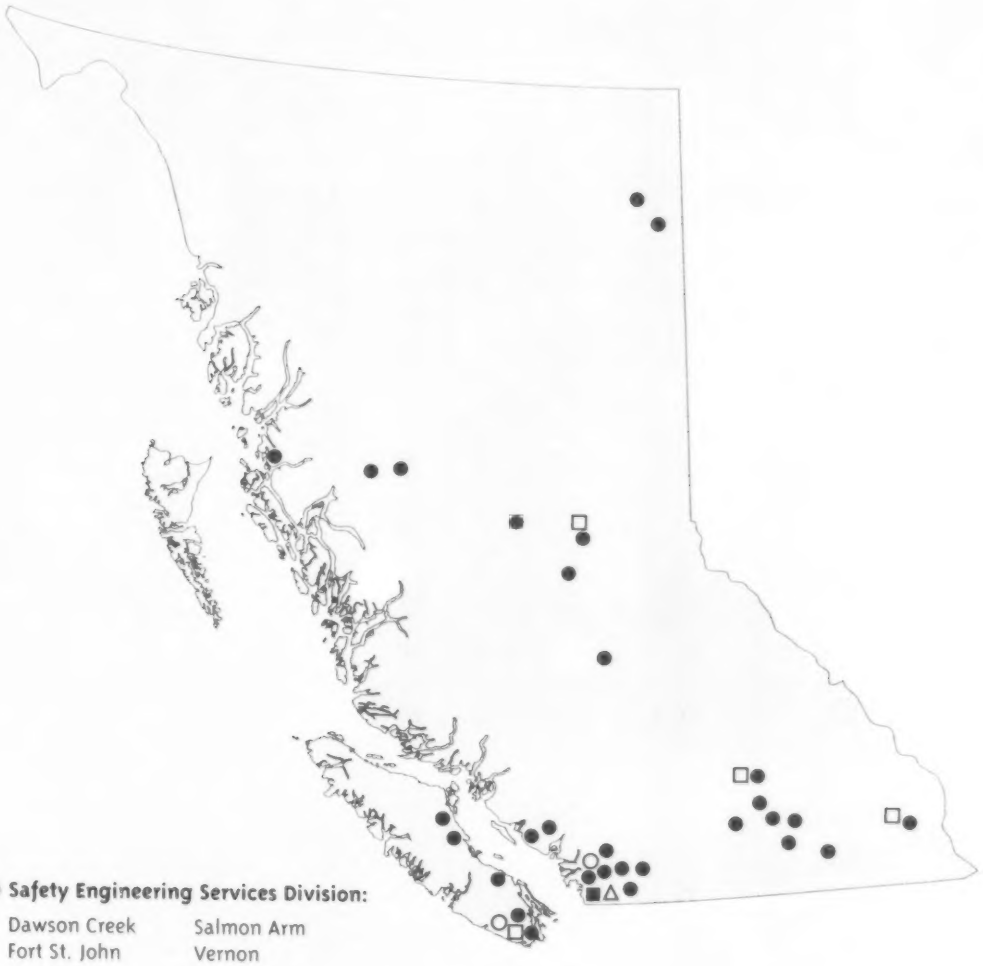
Diversity and flexibility
We recognize that every community and region in British Columbia is different in its economy, geography, culture, ethnic composition, objectives and issues. We believe that the provincial government must be flexible enough to accommodate this diversity.

Fairness
We believe in treating all British Columbians fairly and equitably.

Public Safety
We believe in a safe living and working environment for British Columbians.

Organization Chart

Map of Municipal Affairs Regional Offices



● **Safety Engineering Services Division:**

Dawson Creek
Fort St. John
Kamloops
Prince George
Prince Rupert
Quesnel
Smithers
Terrace
Vanderhoof
Williams Lake
Cranbrook
Kelowna
Merritt
Nelson
Penticton
Salmon Arm
Vernon
Abbotsford
Chilliwack
Coquitlam
Langley
Richmond
Squamish
New Westminster (HQ)
Campbell River
Courtenay
Duncan
Nanaimo
Sechelt
Victoria

□ **Office of the Fire Commissioner:**

Cranbrook
Kamloops
Prince George
Victoria

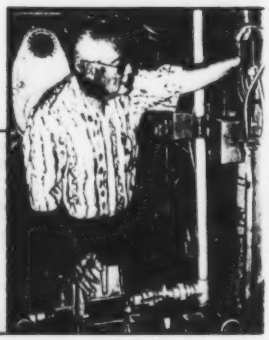
■ **University Endowment Lands Administration**

○ **Library Services Branch:**

Burnaby
Victoria

△ **Property Assessment Appeal Board:**

Richmond



Ministry Activities

INTRODUCTION

Services for Every B.C. Community

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has a diverse mandate that brings with it unique challenges. Anywhere there is an elevator, a provincial or private railway, a gas or boiler system, an electrical wiring installation, a fire station or a public library in B.C., Municipal Affairs is involved. The ministry is also responsible for managing the legislative foundation of local government in B.C., and it represents the province when local governments plan for regional growth.

With 450 staff, the ministry is considered relatively small. Its work, however, has a direct impact on every community in B.C. Through the Office of the Fire Commissioner, for example, training standards are being developed for local fire department personnel, to ensure that communities have qualified fire professionals and volunteers. The Library Services Branch works with public libraries developing and funding programs such as the Summer Reading Program for children, the Audiobook Program, and the Community Library Training Program. The ministry's Growth Strategies Office works with local and regional governments on strategic, long-range planning to help all levels of government make decisions that maintain and enhance the province's environmental health and the overall quality of life for B.C. families.

Municipal Act Reform

The ministry has consulted with local governments on extensive changes to the *Municipal Act*. This was the second in the three-year process of *Municipal Act* reform. These reforms will change the way local governments do business, giving them more governing flexibility and improving their ability to respond to the needs and desires of their residents.

Through the *Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, 1999*, municipalities now have broader service powers – balanced with stronger accountability measures and more flexibility in financial management and tax collection. The new legislative changes also promote fairness and transparency in local government and strengthen a citizen's ability to participate in decision-making at the community level.

The reform process has also strengthened the relationships among the ministry, the Union of B.C. Municipalities and local governments. Their collaborative work will continue in the year ahead,

N.T. (Norm) Hailes, Gas Safety Inspector

Leta Hodge, the ministry's Executive Coordinator, meets with Richard Taylor, UBCM Executive Director, prior to the UBCM Annual Convention.

as the ministry and local governments move to the third and final phase of *Municipal Act* reform.

Meeting the Demands of Change

B.C. communities are constantly changing, and the ministry works hard to meet the demands of those changes through planning, partnerships and accountability. Its success, particularly given the complexity of the mandate, is a direct result of the dedication and experience of its staff.

With so many different areas of responsibility, a sound planning framework is essential. The blueprint for ministry work and transition is a comprehensive set of operational plans that are completed annually by each program unit. These plans comply with Municipal Affairs' own performance reporting requirements and with the accountability framework set out by the Deputy Ministers' Council and the Office of the Auditor General.

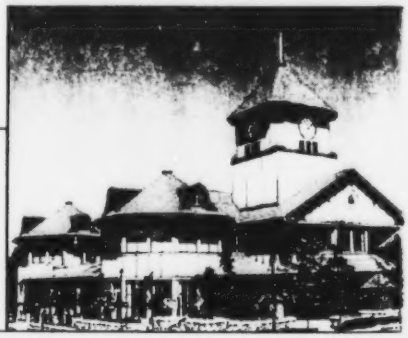
The ministry works to maintain strong and effective partnerships with the Union of B.C. Municipalities, local governments and other clients. These partnerships have been of tremendous benefit in carrying out the extensive legislative changes to the *Municipal Act*. Overall, strengthening relationships across levels of government will help build stronger and more effectively run communities.

The accountability reports contained in Appendix 1 of this annual report are an important component of the ministry's responsibility to be open with and accountable to its working partners and to all British Columbians. This is the third consecutive year in which the ministry has included accountability reports in its annual report.

Linking to Government Priorities

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs contributes in wide-ranging ways to the provincial government's priorities of creating better opportunities and a "greener" society for all British Columbians.

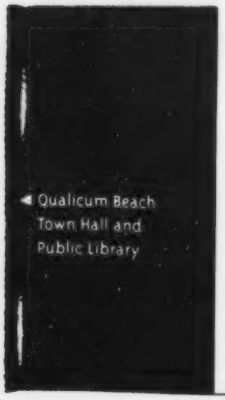
As outlined in this report, much of the ministry's work in 1999/00 focused on providing better services to residents and giving communities more authority and responsibility to make decisions at the local level. *Municipal Act* reforms are a primary tool for accomplishing these goals.



In 1999, the focus of local government financing shifted from unconditional grants to revenue-sharing and increased provincial investment in essential water and sewer infrastructure. The $150 million, three-year Water and Sewer Infrastructure Grant Program, which is matched by local governments, creates jobs, provides the facilities that communities need to attract business, and protects human and environmental health. This new funding will benefit communities throughout the province by improving critical services such as drinking water filtration and sewage treatment and disposal systems.

How This Report is Organized

The information in this annual report is presented in four sections. These correspond to the ministry's operational and strategic work areas: local government, community services, safety, and corporate support. Performance targets for the upcoming year are not included in this annual report. Instead, they are published in the ministry's *Performance Plan 2000/2001* and can be found on the ministry's website at www.marh.gov.bc.ca/PERFORMANCE on the Internet.



◀ Qualicum Beach Town Hall and Public Library

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This year was the second in the three-year process of *Municipal Act* reform. The amendments that were enacted this year will bring about increased autonomy for local governments. For the ministry, it will mean replacing the traditional emphasis of restricting and regulating with a new approach that stresses empowerment, flexibility and accountability for local governments.

These changes will create new roles, relationships and responsibilities as the ministry increasingly takes on the role of partner to provide advice and support to local governments.

1999/00 Accomplishments

The **Aboriginal Issues Program** supports and helps bring about productive and harmonious relationships between local governments and First Nations. The program provides information and guidance to ministry staff, provincial treaty negotiators, other ministries, and representatives of local governments through the Union of B.C. Municipalities. The program helps identify opportunities and bridging issues between local governments and First Nations. This information can be valuable within the treaty-making process, as well as in the broader contexts of policy development and community planning.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTION OF THIS REPORT INCLUDES:

- Aboriginal Issues Program
- Corporate Policy Branch (see note below)
- Growth Strategies Office
- Local Government Structure Branch
- Municipal Advice and Approvals Branch
- Municipal Engineering Services Branch
- Municipal Financial Services Branch
- Planning Advice and Approvals Branch
- University Endowment Lands (UEL) Administration
- Board of Examiners
- Inspector of Municipalities

Note: The Corporate Policy Branch provides policy advice and support to all areas of the ministry. Since the branch has played a significant role in the *Municipal Act* reform process, it has been included under the Local Government section of this report. The work of the branch is also mentioned under the Corporate Support section.

The **Corporate Policy Branch** provides support to senior decision-makers within the ministry and across government, on legislative and regulatory plans, policy development, and program management. In the last several years, it has led the *Municipal Act* reform process. (The Corporate Policy Branch also supports the work of the ministry's safety and community services programs. For more information on the work of the Corporate Policy Branch, see the Corporate Support section.)

The branch reviews and advises on local government and real property assessment legislation, and it maintains the database for the ministry's unconditional local government grants. The branch also provides administrative support to the Board of Examiners, which advances professional development among local government administrators through certification and scholarship awards.

To ensure that policy and legislation lead to service delivery that is efficient and relevant, the branch works closely with a wide range of clients outside of government. This means frequent contact with local governments, agencies and associations, such as the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the Municipal Officers' Association of British Columbia, the Municipal Finance Authority, CivicInfo BC, the Municipal Law Section of the Canadian Bar Association, and the Planning Institute of B.C. The branch also maintains regular contact with all local government officers who have active files before the Board of Examiners.

In addition to leading the second phase of *Municipal Act* reform (see Highlight on next page), the Corporate Policy Branch played a central role in the Third Symposium on New Local Government Legislation, which was held in Richmond in March 2000 and attended by more than 200 local government representatives. Topics included regional district legislation and land-use planning provisions. That meeting laid the groundwork for the third and final phase of *Municipal Act* reform, which will come in 2000.

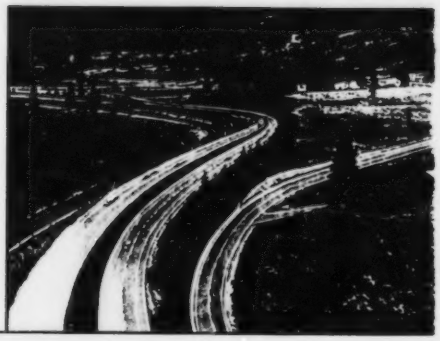
◀ Many ministry staff worked on reforming the *Municipal Act*, with Corporate Policy Branch taking the lead. CPB staff include from left: Alan Osborne, Manager, Policy Development; Brian Walisser, Executive Director; Deidre Wilson, Senior Policy Analyst; Brenda Gibson, MAR Policy & Legislation Coordinator.

Municipal Act Reform

The ministry continued this year to act on its commitment to establish a new legislative foundation for local government in British Columbia. The *Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, 1999* introduced broader powers for municipalities and stronger accountability measures for all local governments. Most of the amendments took effect in September 1999, bringing changes in the following key areas:

- Open meetings – All meetings will be open to the public unless the item to be discussed is within the limited list of topics for which the need for privacy outweighs the need for openness.
- Elections – Improved access will ensure the integrity of elections and enhance the fairness of the process. These amendments also deal with "frivolous candidates" by authorizing local governments to require a refundable nomination deposit.
- Campaign financing – Amendments were made to improve the campaign financing disclosure system. The amendments clarify that the provisions apply to nomination contestants, provide for separate campaign accounts, and require more detailed recording and reporting of campaign contributions and expenses.
- Service powers – Numerous municipal service authorities were consolidated into a general authority to establish and operate any service considered necessary or desirable.
- Business regulation and financing – Municipalities were given the authority to regulate businesses and business activities, establish different business classes, and make appropriate provisions for different classes and different areas of the municipality.
- Finance – All municipal finance provisions were consolidated, including financial planning, reporting and auditing requirements. The authority over expenditures, liabilities and investments was also consolidated.
- Taxes, fees and charges – A new part authorizes the imposition of taxes, fees and charges, including more flexible authority to impose parcel taxes, fees and charges.
- Tax collection – Two alternative tax collection schemes were authorized. Under the general scheme, property taxes are due on July 2nd. Under an alternative scheme, a municipality establishes one or more dates on which taxes are due. Where an alternative scheme is offered, taxpayers may choose between the two schemes.

The ministry plans to complete its substantial legislative reform in 2000, with the third and final phase of changes to the *Municipal Act*. These changes, which will again be based on extensive consultation, will eliminate outdated provisions and give local governments the authority they require to best deliver services to British Columbians.



The **Growth Strategies Office** represents the province when local governments deal with issues related to urban growth, particularly when municipalities and regional districts are preparing growth strategies.

Growth strategy legislation allows regional districts and municipalities, as partners, to establish a 20-year plan for how they will handle urban growth. An effective growth strategy provides environmental, economic and infrastructure benefits. If successfully implemented, a growth strategy can encourage the protection of important natural resources in urban areas, such as agricultural land, sensitive ecosystems, and undeveloped land. It can also help communities increase the efficiency of their institutions and services (e.g., transportation, sewage and water) so they function more smoothly and cost less. Together, environmental and infrastructure improvements raise the overall quality of life in a region, and improve its ability to attract investment.

The growth-strategy process involves several steps, and the office works on all of them, from coordinating provincial agency participation to drafting policy guidelines and best practices guides. The office also deals with other provincial ministries and Crown corporations on growth issues.

Currently, its work is concentrated on Vancouver Island's east coast, the Lower Mainland and the Thompson-Okanagan area.

Accomplishments of the Growth Strategies Office for 1999/00 include:

- Growth-strategies for the Thompson-Nicola Regional District and the Regional District of Central Okanagan neared completion, with adoption anticipated in 2000.
- Considerable progress was made on growth strategies for the Fraser Valley Regional District and the Capital Regional District.
- All municipalities in the Nanaimo Regional District (Nanaimo, Parksville and Qualicum) reached agreement with the regional board on updates to their community plans that reflect the region's *Growth Management Plan*.
- The Regional District of Nanaimo Transit System implementation agreement was signed in June 1999.
- Work continues with the Greater Vancouver Regional District on a strategy for the development of urban schools.
- A *Development Finance Choices Guide* was drafted, with input from stakeholders.

◀ The Thompson-Nicola Regional District

Mayor Lisa Barrett ▶ presiding over Bowen Island's new council at inauguration ceremonies December 4, 1999

The **Local Government Structure** branch is responsible for programs to study and implement the restructuring of municipal boundaries, including incorporation of new municipalities. Branch staff work with provincial agencies, municipalities and regional districts, individual communities and the public to resolve local governance issues and improve local government efficiency. The branch is also involved in reviews of regional district services and boundary adjustments, and the conversion of improvement districts to local government services, and it participates in major policy and legislative initiatives regarding local governance.

Successful votes in June 1999 brought two new municipalities into existence: Sooke, west of Victoria, and Bowen Island, which is B.C.'s first island municipality. The process for governance review was also launched for Saltspring Island, Clearwater, and the University of British Columbia/ University Endowment Lands. A total of 12 municipal boundary proposals were completed, including important extensions in the communities of Cache Creek, Qualicum Beach, Lions Bay and Telkwa. Pender Harbour and Comox Valley residents voted against incorporating or restructuring at present.

Bowen Island: B.C.'s First Island Municipality

In a referendum held June 19, 1999, 66 per cent of Bowen Island voters were in favour of municipal incorporation.

On December 4, 1999, the Municipality of Bowen Island was incorporated as the first island municipality under the new legislative provisions in the *Municipal Act*. It was also the first municipality to be incorporated within the Islands Trust, the land-use agency created in 1974 to preserve and protect the unique character of more than 5,000 square kilometres of water and islands in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound.

The creation of an island municipality provides a unique opportunity for Bowen Island residents to enjoy additional local autonomy while continuing to support the objective of the Islands Trust. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs played several roles in this successful community initiative. It facilitated the overall consultation process, developed legislation, oversaw the referendum and drafted the letters patent or "constitution" for the new municipality.

The **Municipal Advice and Approvals Branch** provides advice and guidance to appointed and elected local government officials, the public, and other government ministries.

The branch advises on a range of topics, including the "nuts and bolts" of the democratic process: elections and by-elections, open government, conflict of interest, and the requirements and methods for obtaining public assent. As well, the branch processes requests for additional powers by Cabinet regulation. Providing information about the *Municipal Act*, and about how local government works and what it can do, helps a wide range of people learn about local governance. It also builds confidence among residents in the structure and operation of their local governments.

Another important branch responsibility is reviewing local government bylaws to ensure that they do not conflict with provincial interests.

Municipal Advice and Approvals Branch highlights during this year:

- The branch was involved in providing information for the general local election in November 1999.
- The branch was asked by councils in several communities to hold conflict-of-interest workshops. These sessions, conducted with the community's municipal lawyer, included a synopsis of case law on the issue, and counsel about avoiding actual or perceived conflicts of interest under the legislation.
- Implementing new legislation is another important branch responsibility. In 1999, the branch held information sessions at the 1999 Union of B.C. Municipalities convention about elections and changes to campaign financing. It also provided a number of bulletins to local governments explaining legislative changes.

1999 General Local Election

The general local election, held November 20, 1999, was an important event for local governments across British Columbia. Electors in 151 local governments and 58 school districts cast votes for mayors, councillors, electoral area directors and school board trustees.

Ministry staff helped local government officials prepare for the 1999 election process by providing advice and information, including several publications. For those wanting to run for office, a candidates' guide explained the process and reporting obligations, as well as the level of commitment that is required. A poster calendar was produced for Chief Election Officers marking statutory deadlines. The ministry also helped the Municipal Officers' Association of British Columbia develop a popular election manual and deliver workshops in six regions of the province. On election day, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., ministry staff responded to questions from Chief Election Officers throughout B.C.

The **Municipal Engineering Services Branch** provides engineering coordination for ministry grant programs and ensures that grant funds are allocated fairly and equitably among competing infrastructure projects. It also provides engineering advice to help local governments plan, construct and maintain infrastructure. An important part of the branch's mandate is to encourage sound infrastructure planning by local governments that will protect public health and the environment and accommodate other provincial priorities.

This year, the branch was involved in important joint projects with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, and the B.C. Water and Waste Association. These partnership initiatives included implementing the provincial Water Conservation Strategy, presenting two groundwater management workshops, researching and developing alternatives to on-site sewage systems, and preparing certification, training programs and a user's guide for operators of small water-supply systems.

The branch was involved in other projects during the year, including:

- representation on the Municipal Sewage Regulation Implementation Committee,
- membership on the Sewage Disposal Regulation Review Committee,
- contributing to the liquid waste management plans for the Capital and Greater Vancouver regional districts,
- participating on a provincial committee that is developing a wide range of community stewardship information for the Internet,
- participating on the Environmental Assessment Review Team on water-related applications for project approval certificates under the *Environmental Assessment Act,* and
- working on groundwater project applications and reviews for Squamish and Chilliwack.

The Municipal Financial Services Branch provides financial advice and regulatory approvals to local governments. These services produce many benefits for British Columbians. They help maintain community infrastructure, promote sound financial management and reporting practices, and ensure that local governments and the overall system remain solvent.

The branch's work includes providing financial assistance for infrastructure planning and construction through the Water and Sewer Infrastructure Grant Program, a three-year, $150 million program established in 1999 for infrastructure planning and implementation. The work also includes providing training support to local governments on financial management and legislative changes, and liaison with other provincial government offices.

The branch often delivers training in partnership with academic, professional and industry organizations. They include the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of B.C., the B.C. Water and Waste Association, the Government Finance Officers' Association, the Municipal Officers' Association of British Columbia, the University of British Columbia, Royal Roads University, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of B.C., among others.

◀ The Revelstoke Infrastructure Project uses new membrane filtration technology.

Revelstoke Infrastructure Project

One of the most innovative infrastructure projects funded this year by the ministry brought safe drinking water to the residents of Revelstoke. The $6.6 million treatment plant is the first municipal installation in B.C. to use new membrane filtration technology. The ministry provided a 50 per cent grant under the Water and Sewer Infrastructure Grants Program. In addition, the ministry provided grants to assist with project planning, including water conservation, evaluation of options and pilot testing of the new technology. These studies and the new technology resulted in savings of $3 million on the original project estimate.

In addition to the Revelstoke infrastructure project, there were a number of other Municipal Financial Services highlights this year:

- A transition study was funded in Gold River. As a result, a provincial financial assistance package was developed to help offset the closure of the town's major employer, the Bowater pulp mill. The assistance package will be managed by the Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers with financial advice from Municipal Affairs. Assistance will be provided over the next five years, as Gold River residents work to stabilize their local economy.
- A new five-year financial planning framework was implemented to help municipalities improve their strategic financial planning.
- An improved computerized financial reporting system was implemented in 1999, which enables local governments to submit financial information electronically, significantly reducing the need for data entry by ministry staff. As a result, this year's report on municipal financial statistics was produced three months ahead of schedule.

The **Planning Advice and Approvals Branch** supports and provides advice to local governments and provincial agencies about community and regional planning, including how to manage development. The branch also helps local governments and provincial ministries work together on matters of provincial interest. Clients range from regional districts and municipalities to provincial ministries and agencies, the Islands Trust, and those involved with community and regional planning and development, including consultants and the public.

The branch administers three conditional planning grant programs: Regional Growth Strategy Planning, Community Planning and Development, and Special Provincial Planning. It also helps develop and implement new legislation, regulations, policies and procedures.

In 1999/00, the ministry provided $1.25 million in grants to local governments for 54 community planning and development projects, three regional growth strategy projects, and three special planning projects. A total of 212 bylaw approvals were processed. The branch also helped develop new land-use management legislation that will simplify the planning process and provide greater scope for local government planning and development.

The **University Endowment Lands (UEL) Administration** falls within the responsibility of the ministry. Operating essentially as a local government, the UEL office administers community planning processes and regulations, public works, building inspections and other typical municipal services for the University Endowment Lands.

In British Columbia, the **Board of Examiners** is the statutory body established under the *Municipal Act* to improve and officially recognize the professional skills of local government employees. The board supports and recognizes local government employees through two programs. Under the Certification Program, the board awards certificates to senior local government employees who have satisfied the educational and work experience criteria set out by board regulations. Under the Scholarship Program, the board awards scholarships to eligible local government employees who want to work toward certification or upgrade their professional skills.

In 1999/00, the Board of Examiners reviewed 17 applications and awarded 12 certificates. The board also approved 58 requests for financial assistance (worth a total of $29,755) through the Scholarship Program.

The *Municipal Act* creates the position of **Inspector of Municipalities**, who is appointed by Cabinet to provide guidance to local governments on statutory requirements and good financial and administrative practices. The *Act* requires that certain local government activities, primarily those related to long-term borrowing and financial viability, receive approval from the inspector. The ministry's Assistant Deputy Minister of the Local Government Department fulfills the role of Inspector of Municipalities.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The work of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs affects every community and British Columbian in the province. Many activities that are basic and important in our everyday lives – being able to use a sidewalk in a wheelchair or on a scooter, borrowing a public library book, or benefiting from a Home Owner Grant – are made possible with expertise, support and advice from Community Services.

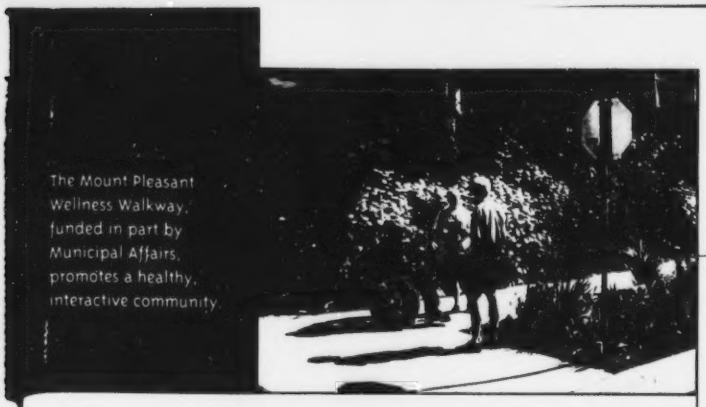
The branches and programs mentioned under the Community Services section of this report work in partnership with local governments, including regional districts, to ensure our communities are livable, accessible to everyone, and treat all property owners fairly. They also work together on putting *Municipal Act* reforms into effect. By using cooperative planning and projects for community growth, development and improvement, local governments and the ministry bring decision-making to the local level, and ensure that changes reflect the needs and resources of the entire community.

THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTION OF THIS REPORT INCLUDES:

- Accessibility Program
- Neighbourhood Enhancement Program
- Library Services Branch
- Home Owner Grant Administration Program
- Property Assessment Review Panels
- Property Assessment Appeal Board

1999/00 Accomplishments

The **Accessibility Program** works to help create communities that are more accessible and livable for everyone. It provides information and advice to individuals and organizations on how to make buildings and communities more accessible, particularly for seniors and people with disabilities, so that all residents can be part of the community. This work involves helping local governments put together community infrastructure and accessibility grant proposals, evaluating those grant applications, working with other ministries and Municipal Affairs programs on policies and legislation, and promoting and explaining the access requirements in the *1998 B.C. Building Code*.



The Mount Pleasant Wellness Walkway, funded in part by Municipal Affairs, promotes a healthy, interactive community.

Clients include local governments, municipal building inspectors, contractors, organizations representing people with disabilities, and the public.

One of the program's main information tools is the *Accessible BC* newsletter, which is produced in print and electronically. The branch also provides promotional material for special events, including Access Awareness Day, which is celebrated in June each year.

In 1999/00, 17 of the 45 community infrastructure grants that were awarded included objectives to make communities more accessible.

The **Neighbourhood Enhancement Program** helps neighbourhoods plan how to improve community life and accessibility for people with disabilities. The program uses workplans and community involvement to develop a workable, consensus-based strategy for making infrastructure or accessibility changes within the community. With the help of the program, communities work to:

- prepare a community-driven workplan,
- establish and market a strategy to carry out the workplan, and
- build partnerships to encourage community buy-in of the plan components.

Mount Pleasant Wellness Walkways Accessibility Grant

The Community Infrastructure and Accessibility Grant Program was initiated in January 1999. One of the program's objectives is to support projects that make public community space more accessible for all, including seniors and people with disabilities. This year, a $50,000 grant enabled the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood in Vancouver to start Phase 1 of a "Wellness Walkways" project.

The project will use a variety of design solutions for public open space and adjacent private property to accommodate the diverse needs of people living, working and visiting the community. The project is distinctive as its design and construction elements encourage everyone in the neighbourhood to spend more time outdoors – promoting a healthier, more interactive community. In addition to accessibility and safety features such as audible traffic signals and curb cuts for wheelchair access, the project includes renewed lighting and landscaping, resting benches, shade trees, community garden plots and accessible picnic tables.

Neighbourhood Enhancement Program Grant — Penticton Creek Walkway

The Neighbourhood Enhancement Program helped Penticton residents with a major walkway project. The walkway runs along Penticton Creek in the downtown core. It links downtown business, waterfront destinations and the art gallery to park and residential areas. The walkway will also serve as a portion of the new Trans Canada Trail and form a gateway to the recently constructed Trail Pavilion in nearby Lake Okanagan Park.

In the short term, the project created local employment. In the longer term, it will mean greater access, safety and increased pedestrian traffic for area businesses.

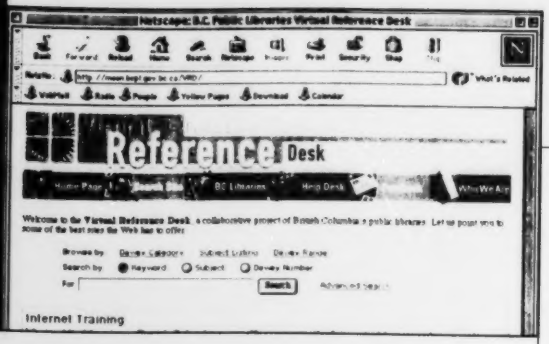
The Neighbourhood Enhancement Program helped the Penticton project team put together a design that fit the community's 1994 Master Plan, the 1998 Downtown Revitalization Strategy, and the Trans Canada Trail millennium celebrations. The ministry provided funding for a report, completion of a land-tenure study, and a public presentation and video. A $50,000 grant in April 1999 under the new Community Infrastructure and Accessibility Grant Program enabled the city to proceed with Phase 1 of the walkway. Work included wheelchair-accessible curbing, landscaping and a playground.

The **Library Services Branch** provides leadership and support to public library authorities to maintain and improve library services throughout British Columbia. In communities across the province, public libraries offer British Columbians access to a world of information. In British Columbia, 98 per cent of the population lives within a public library service area. Last year, B.C. residents borrowed more than 46 million items, an average of 12 items for every resident — one of the highest averages in Canada — and 99 per cent of the province's 227 public library outlets provided Internet access.

The branch administers the *Library Act*, under which all B.C. public libraries operate, and it promotes the use of public libraries throughout the province. Last year, it distributed $8.9 million in annual operating grants to library boards.

Information sharing is a key component of this process. The branch provides funding for *OutLook*, an Internet-based catalogue of B.C. public and college library holdings, which contains more than five million records and facilitates inter-library lending within the province. The branch also brokers out-of-province inter-library loan requests, and provides resource-sharing grants to lending libraries.

From left, Ron Humeny, Marlene Kantz and Ian McIntosh from the City of Penticton Development Services Dept., helped develop the Penticton Creek Walkway.



Virtual Reference Desk

The Virtual Reference Desk website was officially launched in December 1999. The site gives students, researchers and the public quick and easy access to electronic reference information from many of the best and most diverse information sources available on the Internet.

www.bcpl.gov.bc.ca/VRD

Branch publications include the annual *British Columbia Public Libraries Statistics*. For this publication, financial and statistical data are collected from libraries via an Internet-based survey. Beginning with the 1999 edition, this information will be available electronically, on the ministry website, as well as in printed format.

The branch's clients are B.C.'s 72 public library boards, the B.C. Library Association, the B.C. Library Trustees' Association, and the Association of B.C. Public Library Directors. The branch also works in cooperation with federal agencies, in particular the National Library of Canada and Industry Canada. Other service partners include the Association of Book Publishers of B.C., Literacy B.C., the Council of Post-Secondary Library Directors, the Legal Services Society, the Canadian Library Association, and the B.C. Arts Council.

In addition to launching the Virtual Reference Desk, there were a number of major Library Services achievements this year. In summer 1999, the provincial government – through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Information, Science and Technology Agency and the Premier's Youth Office – funded Youth@BC for the third year. With a budget of $450,000, the program was offered in 44 public libraries across the province, providing high-tech training and job experience for 88 young British Columbians between the ages of 15 and 24.

In January 2000, the Library Services Branch was successful in obtaining a $2.5 million gift for public libraries from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The funds will be used to buy computer equipment, improve Internet access and provide computer training facilities for library staff and the public in nearly 50 per cent of the province's public library outlets. In addition, Microsoft Canada Inc. provided software, with a retail value of $1 million, to be distributed to libraries in conjunction with foundation grants. The branch will monitor and report on the results and activities from this gift in British Columbia.

Working with Industry Canada's Regional Information Highway Branch, Library Services administered the distribution of $1.2 million in Urban Community Access Program grants to 14 eligible B.C. public libraries serving communities with a population of

more than 50,000. The Community Access Program is a federal government initiative developed to help provide Canadians with affordable public access to the Internet and the skills to use it effectively.

Library Services also participated in the Canada Millennium Partnership program, a national project initiated by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. The project creates a 240-title digital library collection in English and French for blind and perceptually disabled Canadians and will demonstrate innovative digital recording technologies.

During 1999/00, Library Services also:

- funded the B.C. Library Association to run the summer reading program for more than 70,000 children participating in activities at 80 public libraries,
- produced and distributed 206 new audiobook titles for use by people with perceptual disabilities. Nearly 2,500 free copies of individual audiobooks were distributed to B.C. public libraries, and 6,200 sold copies brought revenues of $193,000, an increase of five per cent over 1998/99,
- offered a new, online Community Library Training Program course, *Introduction to Cataloguing*,
- coordinated province-wide licensing for public libraries to access specialized electronic and commercial databases,
- managed the Writers in Libraries Program, which provides grants to bring B.C. authors into libraries to read or speak, and the Secondment Program, which makes the expertise of public library staff available to other libraries, and
- continued its annual support for the West Coast Book Prizes and its contribution to the Canadian Children's Book Centre.

Home Owner grants provide a form of property tax relief to eligible British Columbia residents who own and occupy their own homes. The program is delivered by 154 municipalities and in rural or unincorporated areas by the office of the Surveyor of Taxes (Real Property Taxation Branch), Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations, on behalf of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The **Home Owner Grant Administration Program** audits grant claims and recovers grants and interest from ineligible claimants. It also has the authority to inspect municipal records relating to the approval of those grants.

The program's primary clients are British Columbia property owners and municipal tax collectors. To ensure that the program was administered

◀ Meharoona Ghani, Interlibrary Loan Technician with the Library Services Branch

fairly and consistently throughout the province in 1999/00, the Home Owner Grant Administration Program:

- conducted 1,200 audits, of which 620 led to recoveries totaling more than $800,000, and
- processed 8,000 retroactive grant applications (i.e., from property owners who did not apply during the proper year), within 30 days of receipt, valued at close to $4 million.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has overall responsibility for the **property assessment appeal system** in British Columbia. B.C. Assessment is a Crown corporation that is responsible for assessing property in accordance with provincial regulations and legislation.

After properties are assessed, tax authorities such as municipalities and school districts apply their tax rates to the assessments to determine how the tax burden will be shared among all property owners.

If property owners disagree with their assessments, they may request a review by a **Property Assessment Review Panel**. Review panels, administered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, are independent of B.C. Assessment and the taxing jurisdictions. They hear evidence to determine if a property has been assessed correctly.

The panels, made up of members from the local community, hold review proceedings. The Minister of Municipal Affairs appoints some 100 panels to hear appeals throughout the province each year.

The next level of review is the **Property Assessment Appeal Board**. This board, which normally consists of members experienced in law or appraisal issues, hears appeals arising from decisions of the Property Assessment Review Panels.

Decisions by the Property Assessment Appeal Board may be challenged on matters of law: they may be appealed to the Supreme Court of British Columbia, the B.C. Court of Appeal, and the Supreme Court of Canada.

SAFETY

The provincial safety system is complex and comprehensive, but the ministry's goal in managing the safety system is simple – to foster a safe living and working environment. The safety system applies to the safety of electrical and gas installations and equipment, elevators and aerial tramways, railways, amusement rides, boilers and refrigeration systems. It touches the life of every British Columbian in a number of different ways. The ministry's safety work ranges from inspecting home wiring installations to developing training standards and skills certification for local fire fighters and fire prevention.

One of the ministry's fundamental objectives is to ensure that this province-wide system continues to function effectively. The ministry is responsible for safety procedures, processes and regulations that affect not just the design, but also the manufacture, construction, operation and maintenance of buildings, equipment, devices, materials and components across these many different disciplines and settings.

The rapid pace of technological change creates particular challenges. For example new materials, products, technologies and services have an enormous impact on the safety of working and living environments throughout B.C. As the population grows and demands on services increase, the ministry must continue to modernize regulation and efficiently adapt and improve the province's multi-layered safety system.

THE SAFETY SECTION OF THIS REPORT INCLUDES:

- Safety Engineering Services Division
  - Boiler, Gas and Railway Safety Branch
  - Electrical and Elevating Devices Safety Branch
  - Certification, Education and Quality Management Branch
  - Management Services Branch
- Office of the Fire Commissioner

◄ N.T. (Norm) Hailes, Gas Safety Inspector

Ed Gagnon, Elevating ► Devices Safety Inspector

Together, these employees bring more than 30 years' experience to safety inspections in B.C.

1999/00 Accomplishments

Safety Engineering Services Division

The Safety Engineering Services Division has primary responsibility for delivering one of the most comprehensive public safety system programs in North America.
The division delivers programs that promote safety in the design, manufacture, construction, installation, operation and repair of boiler and pressure vessels, pressure piping systems, refrigeration plants, gas and electrical equipment, elevating devices and aerial tramways. It is also responsible for the regulatory environment that fosters public and employee safety on intra-provincial railways.

This work, which is carried out from 30 office locations throughout B.C., collectively represents the ministry's largest operational component. Ministry staff who do this work have expertise in the design, engineering, technology and inspection that make public and industry safety programs possible. Authority for the division's safety programs comes from specific legislation (see Appendix 4).

To provide aerial tramway, boiler, electrical, elevating devices, gas and railway safety programs, branches develop, adopt and implement safety standards and procedures and carry out inspections and technical audits. They also work to promote compliance with safety standards, and investigate accidents. In addition, they make sure that only qualified individuals undertake regulated work, and that recommendations and corrections are put in place to eliminate hazards and avoid future accidents.

To keep client groups informed of changes to regulations and standards and advances in technology, the division provides technical seminars, information sessions and bulletins.

Working with client groups involves two way communications, as the Safety Engineering Services Division benefits from the advice of a number of safety advisory committees.
(See more about Volunteers at Work in Safety Programs on page 32.)

In improving safety of everything from household appliances to large-scale industrial operations, the **Boiler, Gas and Railway Safety Branch** serves a diverse group of clients.

In ***boiler and pressure vessel safety,*** the objective is to ensure that the manufacture and operation of pressure-containing equipment complies with safety standards. Inspections cover heating systems in public buildings, such as schools and hospitals, as well as other types of equipment, such as refrigeration systems in hockey arenas, boilers used by dry cleaners, and the heating and venting systems in commercial greenhouses.

Martin Howbold, expert railway steam engineer

In 28 years of inspecting railways for the provincial government, Martin Howbold has crawled inside more boilers and under more engines than he can count. "We've gone from the age of cast iron and steam to the age of computer chips," he said. Howbold has inspected steam engines built in the 1800s and fully automated, computer-controlled, high-speed, light-rail transit systems. One thing has not changed — to keep people safe, nothing runs on provincial or private rails in B.C. until Municipal Affairs railway inspectors have given it the green light.

In addition to carrying out inspections across the province, and working as an expert at the invitation of other provinces, Howbold is working with the Railway Safety program on the massive and painstaking task of updating B.C.'s railway safety regulations.

In ***gas safety*** during 1999/00, the branch:

- held seminars for more than 900 contractors and fitters on issues such as code interpretation and working cooperatively for improved public safety and awareness,
- continued to work with builders and approve completed work on a new co-generation plant in Campbell River, which will use natural gas turbines to provide electricity to a local pulp mill,
- continued work with Ballard Power Systems Inc. on fuel cell development and with Westport Innovations Inc. on technology to utilize liquid natural gas in vehicles to significantly reduce emissions,
- contributed to a standards committee on compressed natural gas cylinders, carbon monoxide detectors and natural and propane gas codes, which led to recommendations for improving national codes and standards,
- supported film industry safety with training, education, and inspections of locations where propane was being used for special effects, and
- provided ongoing support to municipal gas inspectors, investigated and reported on accidents involving natural gas or propane, and issued safety advisories in conjunction with gas utilities.

In ***railway safety***, the branch held hearings this year to review regulation changes proposed by common carrier railways, including the E&N Railway, B.C. Rail, and Southern Railway of B.C. The changes, which would reduce yard crews to a locomotive engineer and a conductor, would potentially be a substantial cost-saving measure for the industry. Other highlights included:

- completion of work on the Occupational Safety and Health Standards for Railways (part 14 of the Railway Safety Code), and
- beginning the review and inspection process for the future SkyTrain extension.

Safety Inspectors check ▶ electrical services in isolated locations. Electrical Inspector Ian Howell boards a Coast Guard Helicopter to reach the lighthouse at Cape St. James in the Queen Charlotte Islands.

The **Electrical and Elevating Devices Safety Branch** is responsible for ***electrical safety***, and there are 56 electrical inspectors located throughout the province who conduct various types of inspections to make our working and living environments safe. In 1999/00, they conducted more than 60,000 inspections and some 5,000 equipment approval inspections. The branch also investigated fire and electrical-related incidents, and was involved in 2,200 hazard elimination orders.

Safety Engineering Services also dealt this year with the aftermath of Skeena River flooding. Many properties in the Thornhill area near Terrace sustained water damage when the unusually large snowpack melted in the late spring. Working with the Provincial Emergency Preparedness Program, Electrical Safety staff quickly and efficiently inspected the restored hydro power to ensure maximum safety.

Mary Ann Burdett of the Management Services Branch within the Safety Engineering Services Division, received the government's Service to the Public Award and the well-deserved appreciation of the community for her work coordinating electrical inspections after the flood.

Rosswood Hydro Project

Rosswood is a large rural area 48 kilometres north of Terrace, which, until recently did not have hydro power. But the local community association organized the residents, and was able to convince BC Hydro that it was economically feasible to bring hydro to Rosswood. Ministry employees Ian Howell, electrical inspector, and Mary Ann Burdett, Management Services Branch customer service representative, played key roles in the success of the project.

The population of Rosswood is spread out along mostly gravel and logging roads, where signposts are rare and surrounding forest is dense. Howell had to inspect all homeowner electrical installations, which accounted for approximately 60 per cent of installations, an unusually high percentage. Burdett coordinated when and where inspections were required and provided Howell with maps, hand-drawn sketches, and directions gathered from homeowners when they purchased their permits. There were no delays, and residents had their hydro connected in a timely, efficient, safe manner. The people of Rosswood awarded Burdett a certificate of appreciation, and bought a newspaper advertisement to publicly express their gratitude to both.

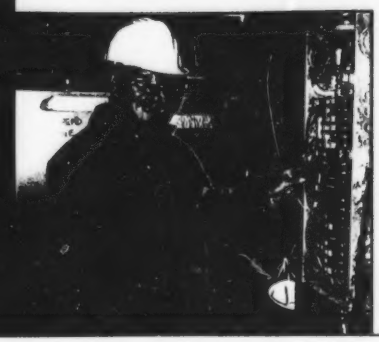
The Electrical and Elevating Devices Safety Branch is also responsible for ***elevating devices safety***, which includes elevators and escalators, ski lifts and amusement rides. New technology continues to have a significant impact on elevator and tramway operation and safety. Elevating Devices Safety staff review technical and design submissions and attend testing sessions, which must be completed successfully before operating permission is given. They also work with design and building innovations that create new opportunities and applications. For example, a 54-floor high-rise that is currently under construction in Vancouver will be the highest building in B.C. It will be equipped with 12 high-speed elevators. At the other end of the scale, new technology has also produced a breakthrough for elevators servicing buildings of 10 floors or less. Operating machinery can now be housed in the hoist-way, rather than in a traditional rooftop machine room. This innovation allows for additional top-floor housing units. The branch inspected the installation of two of these units in 1999/00.

Ski-area operators have tested various devices to find an easy, safe way to move beginners uphill a short distance. A type of adapted conveyor carpet appears to be the solution. The technology is borrowed, in part, from moving sidewalks, such as those used in major airport terminals, and other conveyor units, and it makes use of the latest electronic controls. During 1999/00, the branch tested several installations by different manufacturers to ensure compliance.

The **Certification, Education and Quality Management Branch** is responsible for registering, examining, certifying and licensing for the electrical, gas, power engineer and elevating devices safety programs under their respective safety acts and regulations. The branch provides educational services to the public, workers and industry. It also institutes quality management programs. In 1999/00, it coordinated secretariat support services for appeal boards and safety advisory committees.

Highlights of the branch's work this year included the following:

- The branch administered 3,100 oral and written examinations, issued 2,300 certificates and wallet cards and issued more than 10,000 contractor licences.
- To improve credentialling programs, the branch conducted a five-day workshop with industry and training institutions on techniques to develop course outlines and examinations for the electrical, gas, power engineer and elevating devices safety programs. Examination databases



◀ Ed Gagnon
Elevating Devices
Safety Inspector

Norm Hastings ▶
ctrical Safety Inspector

important members of
B.C.'s safety system

for these programs were reviewed and updated, with input from industry, local governments and training institutions. Co-operative program students worked with the branch to audit and update worker qualification data in the power engineers and gas fitter registries.

- To improve client service, the branch streamlined the way it handles high volumes of exams and certificates. Computerizing and automating exam marking and exam result notifications and certificates significantly reduced turnaround time.
- To implement the Power Engineers, Boiler, Pressure Vessel and Refrigeration Regulation, the branch developed course outlines and exam databases for the new Boiler Awareness Certificate and the Refrigeration Awareness Certificate.
- To inform and provide improved access to information, the branch prepared and published safety information, such as the publication *Electrical Safety Matters*, and maintained the website for the Safety Engineering Services Division.

The **Management Services Branch** provides professional front-line and support services at the 30 ministry offices in B.C. on behalf of the seven safety and technical programs in the Safety Engineering Services Division. The branch provides information, advice and referral services to clients on matters ranging from installation permits and remote access to equipment approval, examinations, certification and licences. Management Services staff are often the first contact for the public. The branch is also responsible for providing financial, administrative and information systems support services for the 230 staff of the Safety Engineering Services Division.

That responsibility extends to the division's electronic system for issuing electrical and gas permits to contractors throughout the province. The system enables electrical and gas contractors to complete a permit application, pay for it and receive the permit — all online. It also advises ministry inspectors when the installation is ready to be inspected. During the past year, more than 10,000 permits were issued through this system, and as of March 31, 2000, more than 800 contractors were using it.

◀ Louise Thompson, Chair of the Power Engineers, Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety Advisory Committee.

Fire fighters take part in ▶ the Level II Canadian Fire Investigation School administered in B.C. by the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

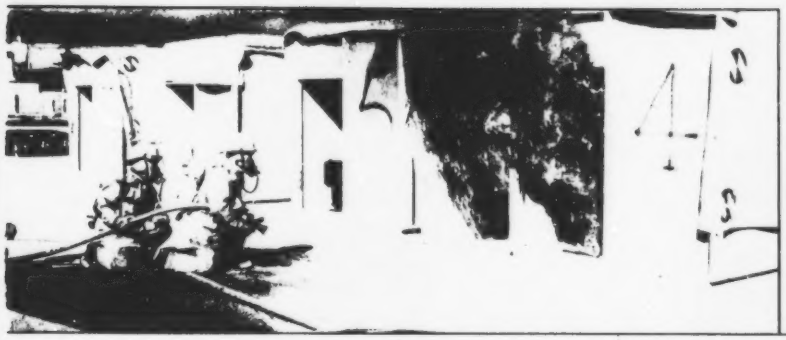
Volunteers at work in safety programs

This year, Louise Thompson became the first woman to chair the Power Engineers and Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety Advisory Committee. Thompson received her certification as a Power Engineer, First Class, in 1994, becoming the first woman in British Columbia, and only the second in Canada to do so. That certification places her among the most qualified in the field in Canada. She is currently an assistant steam plant superintendent at a pulp mill on Vancouver Island.

The Power Engineers and Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety Advisory Committee is one of five such committees that report regularly to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. (The others are electrical safety, elevating devices safety, gas safety, and fire safety.) Committee members all volunteer their time and provide expert advice to the minister and staff of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The branch maintains all of the division's computers, networks, safety software applications and telecommunications for the regional offices across B.C. As part of that responsibility, the branch successfully tested more than 1,000 application programs during 1999 to ensure that the Safety Engineering Services Division's computerized safety systems were Y2K-compliant. As part of a ministry-wide initiative, the branch began converting desktop computers to Microsoft NT Server/Winterm hardware this year, which will save on hardware expenditures, reduce maintenance costs, and speed the implementation of software upgrades.

The branch is also responsible for the building occupancy and general office administration of the ministry's 30 regional offices. During 1999/00, it oversaw the amalgamation of the two largest division offices at one location in New Westminster, which centralized headquarters staff, provided a proper examination facility for contractors and tradespeople, and reduced division rent costs.



The **Office of the Fire Commissioner** is the senior fire authority in British Columbia. As the body responsible for administering the *Fire Services Act* and the B.C. Fire Code, the office delivers services such as fire service training, fire investigation, fire inspection, and the interpretation and enforcement of B.C. Fire Code regulations and standards.

The office provides advice to local governments and fire departments. It also coordinates the delivery of public information, such as provincial fire loss statistics, fire safety programs, safety hazard warnings, and the B.C. Fire Service Certification Program.

The goal of the office is to help reduce injury or death, and loss of property caused by fire. Investigating fire scenes to determine cause, analyzing fire loss statistics and conducting public education and awareness activities are all ways in which the office works to achieve this goal.

B.C. Fire Service Certification Program

In January 2000, the Province of British Columbia formally established, for the first time, a program of certification for B.C. fire service personnel to provincial standards. This was accomplished through the B.C. Fire Safety Advisory Council and the Office of the Fire Commissioner under the authority of the *Fire Services Act*.

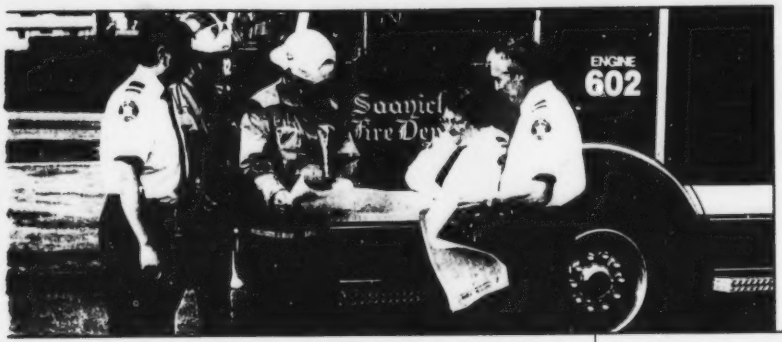
The purpose of the certification program is to formally recognize those fire service members who have met length-of-service criteria and demonstrated the high level of competency required by fire service standards.

The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) provides training and support for B.C.'s fire service. Kempton Quon, Fire Saftey Officer, OFC; Rick Ross and Dave Brown, Saanich Fire Department; Jackie Goodwin, Fire Safety Officer, OFC and Vern Atkinson, Regional Fire Commissioner, OFC.

The office also supports a network of more than 800 local assistants to the Fire Commissioner who have been appointed under the *Fire Services Act* to enforce fire safety regulations throughout the province. Most of these are volunteer fire fighters.

Better-trained fire fighters means improved fire fighter safety, reduced liability for local governments, and improved service to the public. Less fire loss leads to lower insurance costs and less disruption to lives and businesses. Safer public buildings are part of an improved quality of life for all B.C. residents. To these ends, the office works with:

- local assistants to the Fire Commissioner, fire departments, and local governments — to provide training, support and a consultative resource for establishing and operating fire departments, delivering fire protection services and administering fire safety legislation,
- provincial fire service associations and the B.C. Fire Safety Advisory Council — to cooperatively ensure that proper training, standards and programs are in place in the provincial fire service, to provide a forum for discussing or addressing issues, and to make recommendations for improving existing programs and services,
- the Provincial Emergency Preparedness Program and the Ministry of Forests — to provide emergency response to provincial disasters and fires in urban-wild interface areas, and to coordinate evacuations and responses to fire,
- law enforcement, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police — to provide expert witness evidence in criminal fire cases, work with law enforcement agencies on fire investigations, and provide fire investigation training; and



- the Justice Institute of B.C., the Workers' Compensation Board, and the insurance industry — to help develop training standards, provide information on safety inspections and fire service orientation programs, advise about key office initiatives, and make fire service personnel aware of occupational hazards.

In 1999/00, the Office of the Fire Commissioner implemented the B.C. Fire Service Certification Program. The office also developed a new *Basic Level Fire Investigation Manual* and training program, launched an Internet-based fire reporting system to provide fire departments throughout the province with a method for online reporting, and developed the B.C. Fire and Life Safety Education curriculum. In partnership with McDonald's restaurants, 360,000 fire safety worksheets were delivered to children through B.C. elementary schools.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

The **Corporate Services Department** administers the ministry's financial, human, physical and information resources. This work involves delivery of core support services to all ministry programs.

As well as providing traditional administrative support, Corporate Services assesses, tests and implements new technological and business processes to reduce costs and improve the efficiency of work and communication with internal and external clients. Outside of the ministry, these clients include provincial government agencies, local governments, contractors and suppliers, the B.C. Government Employees' Union, the B.C. Government Professional Employees' Association, the British Columbia Excluded Employees' Association, and the public.

This year, emergency preparedness and Y2K compliance were top priorities, underlining the ministry's intimate relationship with province-wide safety and local-governance systems. The department completed essential business continuation plans for both headquarters and the 36 regional offices to ensure that ministry programs and services would resume as swiftly as possible in an emergency. The ministry also made related procedural and technological changes and upgrades – both to strengthen its ability to respond to a disaster or an emergency and to increase day-to-day efficiency.

THE CORPORATE SUPPORT SECTION OF THIS REPORT INCLUDES:

- Corporate Services Department
  - Administration Branch
  - Human Resources and Corporate Development
  - Information and Privacy Branch
  - Information Systems Branch
  - Financial Services Branch
- Communications Branch
- Corporate Policy Branch

ancy Pearson, Assistant Director of Communications, works with other ministry staff to inform the public on ministry initiatives.

aron Plunkett, Secretary to the Planning Advice and Approvals Branch

Accountability and accessible information were the focus of other departmental goals for the year. Internally, that included accountability reports and a new process for annual planning and reporting. Externally, it included standardizing and developing the ministry's Internet site to meet government-wide specifications and improve public access. The ministry also worked this year on employment equity and multiculturalism issues, with positive results.

Again in 1999/00, the ministry searched out corporate, administrative and operational efficiencies without compromising program or client services.

1999/00 Accomplishments

The **Administration Branch** manages and coordinates the ministry's day-to-day physical and operational needs. The branch's main duties are managing facilities, assets, space planning, improvements to tenant facilities, business continuation planning and emergency preparedness, purchasing and materiels management, and postal services.

The branch led business continuation planning for headquarters and regional offices in 1999/00 and coordinated the first full year of the "No Waste" program at Victoria headquarters. Under this program, ministry staff are encouraged to recycle materials wherever possible instead of throwing them out. The building now uses a smaller dumpster, which is emptied less often, and savings are already nearly $6,000 a year. Paper recycling has doubled, and recycling of tin, glass and plastic has quadrupled since the program started.

The **Human Resources and Corporate Development Branch** recruits and maintains a competent workforce for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The branch is responsible for employment equity, multiculturalism, training, and employee safety programs.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs is dedicated to creating a discrimination-free work environment that reflects, respects and values diversity, and in which all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. This includes developing a workforce that represents British Columbia's diverse population, including aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, visible minorities, and women in under-represented areas. This year, the branch participated in four major job fairs to encourage people from these under-represented groups to consider employment with the Government of British Columbia, and it managed a competition for qualified female applicants to fill two vacant safety inspector positions.

Activities to bring about a more equitable work environment are succeeding because of support from all quarters of the ministry. The Executive Management Committee, including the Deputy Minister's Office, the Ministry Employment Equity and Multiculturalism Committee and the Human Resources Branch work with other branches and inter-ministry committees on communications and program initiatives. In 1999/00, the ministry held five training sessions, attended by 117 employees, on preventing discrimination. The branch also contributed to ministry publications (e.g., *Accessible BC*), and organized special events, such as celebrations of Multiculturalism Week to promote awareness of diversity and equity issues, and International Women's Day.

Women Safety Inspectors Hired

Women are significantly under-represented in the occupational group that includes electrical inspectors. The designated representation for women across government is 50 per cent, but until this year, the province employed no female electrical inspectors.

After approval from the Public Service Employee Relations Commission and the B.C. Government Employees' Union, two inspector positions were posted as "preferenced." This means that the hiring committee looked first at qualified applicants within the designated group (i.e., women) before considering non-designated group applicants. In spring 2000, the ministry hired its first two female electrical inspectors.

Maureen Bird, Supervisor, Systems Support and Stephen Norton, Manager of Information Systems, provided excellent ongoing technical support to staff while addressing the potential Y2K bug behind the scenes.

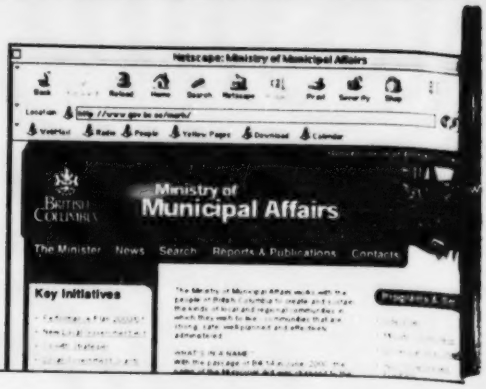
The **Information and Privacy Branch** manages the ministry's functions under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and its recorded information under the *Document Disposal Act*. The branch also advises local governments on information and privacy requirements and practices. In 1999/00, the branch worked on the Operational Records Classification System for the Safety Engineering Services Division, the Library Services Branch, and the Local Government Department.

The **Information Systems Branch** maintains all head office computers, networks, computer-based procedures, and telecommunications and is responsible for ministry-wide shared applications. This involves developing new systems initiatives, acquiring hardware and software, and training ministry users on new software applications. This year, the branch converted 30 per cent of all desktop computers in the ministry (i.e., 120 terminal server clients and five servers) from desktop computers to the Microsoft NT Server/Winterm hardware environment. This move will mean long-term hardware cost savings and more timely software upgrades. The branch also put in place – ahead of schedule – a new information system for property assessment appeals and, with Communications Branch, significantly improved and expanded the ministry's Internet site. The Information Systems Branch, working together with the Management Services Branch in New Westminster, ensured that all of the ministry's information systems were Y2K-compliant.

The **Financial Services Branch** is responsible for the ministry's financial management. The branch looks after accounting, payroll, budgetary control, operational reviews, financial policies and procedures, financial reporting, and performance planning.

Preparing for Y2K

This was a particularly crucial year for the Corporate Services Department. Its operational responsibility for ensuring Y2K readiness throughout the ministry extended to providing information to local governments and contractors involved in the safety system. All ministry systems were made Y2K compliant on schedule. To further ensure that ministry services to clients and staff were not disrupted, a core complement of systems and program staff were available to deal with any emergencies during the systems rollover to 2000.



In preparation for Y2K, the branch tested and successfully implemented a millennium-compliant financial accounting system during 1999. Following that, as part of the government's initiative to move all ministries to a common accounting system, the branch successfully implemented the Corporate Accounting System on April 1, 2000. To make this change, the branch moved the ministry's historic financial commitment data to the new system, adopted a new chart of accounts and trained ministry staff. The long-term benefits of the new system include lower support costs and more efficient reporting.

The Financial Services Branch also participated in the government's financial benchmarking project to identify best financial practices. Comprehensive recommendations are not yet complete, but the branch has already consolidated expenditure processing, freeing staff resources for revenue administration.

The **Communications Branch** works with management and employees to inform the public about ministry programs and services. The branch is responsible for all aspects of communications planning, writing, issues management, media relations, editorial design and coordination, and event planning. This frequently involves working with other ministries and government agencies, with local government officials, with safety awareness committees, and on projects with ministry clients such as the Union Of B.C. Municipalities. A significant accomplishment this year was the work the branch did with Information Systems Branch to substantially revamp the ministry's Internet site.

gov.bc.ca

New and Improved Ministry Internet Site

As part of the government-wide initiative to improve and standardize provincial ministry information on the Internet, the Information Systems Branch and Communications Branch worked closely to substantially update and reorganize the ministry's Internet site. Improvements include a comprehensive list of the ministry's reports and publications, and how to access them. The information is now easier to find, and the entire site simpler to navigate.

Other innovations include a legislation page for people working in local government and safety services. The page provides links to the most-referenced pieces of legislation that guide local government and safety work.

The ministry's website address is www.marh.gov.bc.ca on the Internet.

In addition to its leadership role in *Municipal Act* reform, the **Corporate Policy Branch** provides policy advice and support to all of the ministry's branches and programs. For example, the branch has been involved in the ministry's work to ensure safe, efficient safety systems throughout the province. The branch helps ensure that legislative and safety regulation amendments keep pace with changing community needs. It also offers ongoing support by interpreting legislation and advising ministry staff on program and policy changes as they relate to B.C.'s safety system.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS

Appendix 1 reports on the actual results of ministry performance targets published in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs 1998/99 Annual Report and the 1999/2000 Business Plan.

Since 1996, the ministry has followed a formal planning and reporting process to hold its programs accountable for results. This process is continuing to evolve as the ministry shifts to more meaningful outcome indicators and adapts to the requirements established by the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Aboriginal Issues Program

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Make significant progress on major treaty negotiation policy areas, including: • treaty-making in urban and settled areas, • non-aboriginal representation issues in future aboriginal governments, and • finding new ways for local governments and First Nations to work together to build better relationships and to collaborate in decision-making and managing their communities.	• A report on urban treaty issues entitled *Approaches and Options for Treaties in Urban Areas: A Discussion Paper* was produced following a series of workshops with the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM). The report can be found at www.marh.gov.bc.ca/ABORIGINAL/urban.pdf on the ministry website. • Non-member representation (referenced in the report) is the subject of consultation with the provincial Treaty Advisory Committee. • Initiatives to build new relationships between local governments and First Nations include ministry funding of $25,000 to the UBCM for 10 First Nations/local government forums this year.	• The ministry's Aboriginal Issues Program website at www.marh.gov.bc.ca/ABORIGINAL provides information on treaty making and local government issues.

Growth Strategies Office

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• By year end, adopt a growth strategy for three high-growth regional districts: Thompson-Nicola, Fraser Valley, and Central Okanagan.	• Growth strategies for the Thompson-Nicola Regional District and the Central Okanagan Regional District are in the adoption process. Substantial progress has been made in the Fraser Valley Regional District. Adoption of a growth strategy in all three regions is expected in the coming year.	• A regional growth strategy is a local government strategic planning vision for achieving common social, economic and environmental goals. These strategies provide long-range planning direction for regional district and municipal official community plans, and serve as a basis for decisions about implementing provincial programs in the area over the next 20 years.
• Successfully negotiate and sign two to three new implementation agreements (e.g., within the Greater Vancouver and Nanaimo regional districts.)	• The Regional District of Nanaimo's Transit System Implementation Agreement was signed in June 1999. An agreement on the Agricultural Land Reserve is under discussion. • A draft Aggregate Implementation Agreement is complete for the Regional District of Nanaimo. A draft Soil Removal bylaw has been written in conjunction with that agreement. • The Greater Vancouver Regional District is involved in ongoing work on urban schools. It has not yet decided on an implementation agreement.	• An implementation agreement is a partnership agreement between a regional district and other levels of government, their agencies or other bodies, which spells out the details of how certain aspects of a regional growth strategy will be carried out.
• There will be a successful resolution of any outstanding regional context statements that link local government official community plans to the regional growth strategy.	• Outstanding regional context statements in the Regional District of Nanaimo have been successfully resolved.	• This work in ongoing.
• The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District will make a decision on whether to embark on a regional growth strategy.	• Discussions are continuing with the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District.	
• Provincial interests in regions are reviewed and updated as needed.	• This work is ongoing. The Growth Strategies Office worked on determining the provincial interests in the Cowichan Valley, as there will not be a growth strategy in the region.	• Provincial interests may include regional rationalization of sewer, water and highway infrastructure. It may also include protection of agriculturally productive lands and the working forest, air and water quality, and environmentally sensitive areas.
• Develop *A Choices Guide for Alternatives to Development Cost Charges*, with stakeholders.	• A draft Choices Guide was completed by March 31, 2000. Distribution and consultation on the draft guide will take place during 2000/01.	

Local Government Structure Branch

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Continue to work with community representatives and local governments on high-priority restructure processes, including Bowen Island, Sooke, Brunswick Beach, Phase 2 of Quesnel's restructure, Pender Harbour, Comox Valley, University of British Columbia/University Endowment Lands (UBC/UEL), Saltspring Island, and Clearwater.	• Incorporation was achieved for the new municipalities of Bowen Island and Sooke. • Restructuring was achieved for Lions Bay to enclose Brunswick Beach. • Restructure processes have been set up for UBC/UEL, Saltspring Island, and Clearwater. • The residents of Pender Harbour and Comox Valley chose not to incorporate/restructure at present.	
• Print and distribute a restructure planning grant brochure and restructure committee guidelines to better inform clients about the restructure process.	• Both projects are in progress.	• The ministry expects to complete this work in 2000/01.

Municipal Advice and Approvals Branch

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Implementation of *Municipal Act* legislative changes.	• To help users understand the amendments made in the *Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, 1999*, implementation bulletins were issued on topics such as open meetings, election amendments, and campaign financing. • The ministry's Municipal Advice and Approvals website was regularly updated. Site information included local government bulletins, guides for candidates and voters, a sample procedure bylaw, and a Frequently Asked Questions section about open meetings.	• An ambitious package of legislation (the *Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, 1999*) was adopted in 1999. It accounted for almost one quarter of all legislation adopted by government in the 1999 session.
• Conduct a survey of local government clients and achieve an 80 per cent satisfaction rate.	• Preparation work for the local government elections took precedence over completion of this survey.	

Municipal Engineering Services Branch & Municipal Financial Services Branch

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Maintain or improve the financial viability, continuity, stability and management of local governments.	• The credit rating of the Municipal Financing Authority remained AAA during 1999/00. • Four local governments were in a minor deficit position at the end of 1998/99. The ministry is following up with these local governments to ensure that appropriate changes are made. The ministry will continue to monitor these in subsequent years. • The ministry analyzed local governments' financial statements and found that the reserves, debt ratios, and receivables as a percentage of tax revenues were within acceptable levels. • All local governments met their financial obligations in 1999.	• One request for special assistance was received from Gold River, in response to its pulp mill closure. The province is providing special transitional assistance to Gold River over a five-year period.
• On January 1, 2000, implement the majority of Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) recommendations for local governments.	• A 1999 survey of B.C. Government Financial Officers' Association members showed that 75 per cent of B.C.'s local governments followed all or part of the PSAB recommendations before the January 1, 2000 implementation date.	• The ministry is working with local governments on full implementation of the PSAB recommendations.
• Review approximately 600 applications for infrastructure and planning grants and maximize the number of critical projects that will be funded under the Planning and Infrastructure Grant Programs.	• More than 670 applications were received and processed. 110 priority sewer and water projects and 125 planning projects were given funding approval in 1999/00.	• Selection criteria included environmental and health, growth strategies and community in transition factors.
• Help develop and support qualified, trained operators for small water systems by providing an operator's manual, training programs, and developing best management practices and certification requirements.	• Completion of the operator's manual was delayed. A specialist consultant, with the help of in-house expertise, is now continuing the work. • Training programs and certification requirements are under review.	
• Present at least two groundwater management workshops to develop community participation in groundwater management. Workshops should be held in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks (MELP), the Ministry of Health (MOH), and the B.C. Water and Waste Association.	• Groundwater management workshops were held in Duncan and Whistler in partnership with MELP, MOH, the B.C. Water and Waste Association, and the B.C. Groundwater Association.	• Further workshops are planned throughout the province, including Prince George and Grand Forks.

Municipal Engineering Services Branch & Municipal Financial Services Branch

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Amend the Water Conservation Plumbing Regulation to include water-efficient devices and fixtures in new building construction in B.C.	• Research is complete on water-efficient devices and fixtures. Discussions were held with Seattle, Toronto and Winnipeg about water-efficiency implementation. • The regulation is currently being revised.	• This work is a component of the B.C. Water Conservation Strategy currently being implemented by the B.C. Water and Waste Association.
• Through the Water and Sewer Infrastructure Grant Program, help at least 20 local governments take water-efficiency conservation measures.	• The ministry received 10 water conservation planning grant applications and provided grants to help all 10 local governments conduct water audits or implement water-efficiency measures.	• This work is being completed in support of the provincial Water Conservation Strategy.
• Working with other agencies, develop a comprehensive study on alternative solutions to on-site sewage systems, including maintenance and management models and review of the Sewage Disposal Regulation.	• Working in partnership with other agencies, the ministry initiated both regional and provincial studies to assess alternative solutions and models to on-site sewage systems. These studies, including the Sewage Disposal Regulation Review, are ongoing.	• This work is in partnership with MELP, Ministry of Transportation and Highways, Capital Regional District, and the federal Department of Environment.

University Endowment Lands (UEL)

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Have amendments to the Community Plan bylaw finalized by the UEL Bylaw Review Committee and approved by the minister.	• Draft amendments have been completed. • Revisions to the proposed amendments were required in response to comments received from the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the University of British Columbia.	• The ministry plans to complete these revisions in 2000/01 for adoption into the UEL bylaws.
• Complete the incorporation study on the status of Electoral Area A. Provide recommendations to the Greater Vancouver Regional District board and the University of British Columbia Board of Governors.	• The incorporation study was completed, but consensus was not achieved.	• The Governance Committee for Electoral Area A will respond to the minister in 2000/01 on this result.
• Complete road and sewer improvement projects to serve the commercial district.	• Design, tendering and construction of sewer and road works along University Boulevard, Allison Road and McMaster Road have been completed. • Design work on Jim Everett Park, angle parking on Western Parkway, and completion of traffic-calming measures were postponed to 2000/01.	• The delay of the sale of land within Block 97 delayed funding for the proposed infrastructure.

University Endowment Lands (UEL)

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Comply with new Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) regulations by amending the *UEL Occupational Health and Safety Manual*.	• UEL is participating in the Joint Municipal Risk Assessment Project that is developing revised occupational health and safety guidelines to comply with the new WCB regulations.	• Over the two years of the project, 25 modules will be prepared. Two modules were completed this year. • The remaining modules will be completed by the end of summer 2001.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Home Owner Grant Administration Program

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Recover between $25,000 and $35,000 per month per auditor in grants claimed by ineligible home owners.	• During 1999/00, auditors worked at a recovery rate of approximately $35,000 per month.	
• Maintain a recovery/ investigation ratio of at least 30 per cent.	• In 1999/00, 65 per cent of investigations resulted in a recovery.	
• Create a new home owner's grant regulation for persons with disabilities.	• The start of the public consultation process, led by the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security, was delayed. As a result, the development of the regulation has also been delayed.	

Accessibility Program

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS

• The program will continue work with the Office for Disability Issues on:
  • co-chairing the Parking for People with Disabilities Task Team,
  • legislative amendments, and
  • producing 300 best practices and innovative approaches booklets for local governments.
	• The Parking for People with Disabilities Task Team's request for legislation was forwarded to the Deputy Ministers' Council and Cabinet. It was not approved to go forward in 1999/00.
	• The booklet project has been carried forward to 2000/01.
		• The Accessibility Program of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs promotes universal access in the built environment. The program advisor provides information, advice and guidelines to encourage community accessibility.
		• The ministry's Accessibility Advisor continues to work closely with the Office for Disability Issues.

• A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section will be added to the program's website.	• The website does not yet include a FAQ section. This project will be completed in 2000/01.	• The Accessibility Program website has further information: www.marh.gov.bc.ca/ACCESS

Library Services Branch

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
Audiobook Program		
• Record and distribute a minimum of 235 new titles to B.C. public libraries.	• In 1999/00, 206 new titles were produced and distributed.	• More than 2,470 free copies of audiobooks were distributed to six B.C. collections
• Match or exceed the 1998/99 revenue from out-of-province sales.	• The sale of 6,207 copies of audiobooks brought total revenues of $192,947, which was a 5 per cent increase over 1998/99.	
Community Library Training Program		
• Finish expanding all distance-training modules from print to electronic format.	• The expansion was completed in September 1999.	• More information on the training course is available at the Library Services Branch website: www.marh.gov.bc.ca/LIBRARY
• Complete the development of a new online cataloguing training module.	• *Introduction to Cataloguing*, an online training course, was offered for the first time in fall 1999.	
Public Library Depository Program		
• Review the effectiveness of the program, which provides print versions of selected provincial government publications to depository libraries.	• The Advisory Committee to the Provincial Depository Library Program was unable to meet regularly in 1999/00. This project was therefore not completed. In light of the government's priority to make print materials available electronically, the project has been carried forward to 2000/01.	
Youth@BC		
• Offer an expanded summer youth employment program, with special emphasis on initiatives that extend public library Internet access to seniors.	• Eighty-eight young people were employed in public libraries during 1999/00 – an increase over the previous summer.	
Gates Foundation		
• Administer the funding for public libraries, as designated by the foundation, to provide special support for public Internet access.	• The application/adjudication process was completed by February 2000.	• The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation gift of $2.5 million was allocated to 31 public library boards.

Neighbourhood Enhancement Program

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Help 20 communities complete neighbourhood enhancement workplans.	• By year-end, $87,000 in grants had been allocated to 20 communities.	

Property Assessment Appeal Board

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Continue to ensure that appeals are resolved in a timely manner.	• In 1999, the average number of days from hearing to decision was 91.5. That represents a 13 per cent reduction over 1998.	
• Reduce the backlog of outstanding appeals by effectively using case management and alternative dispute resolution techniques.	• The number of outstanding appeals was 456 on December 31, 1999. This represented a 30 per cent reduction over December 31, 1998, and a 75 per cent reduction over December 31, 1996.	
• Reduce the cost of resolving an appeal to all parties through greater use of single member panels, shorter hearings, hearings by written submission or telephone, and more effective use of decision writing time.	• The Board saved an estimated $50,000 by using single member panels in 1999. • The average hearing length was 0.7 days in 1999 compared to 0.65 days in 1998 and 1 day in 1997. • There were 75 per cent more Appeal Management Conferences (AMC's) (499) held in 1999 than in 1998. AMC's speed up the appeal process by resolving appeals without hearings where possible, or focusing discussions when hearings are required.	

Property Assessment Review Panels

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Continue to improve the assessment review process through Property Assessment Review Panels.	• Ministry staff participated in providing one-day training sessions for all 300 members of the Property Assessment Review Panels.	

SAFETY

Safety Engineering Services Division

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Complete the division's move to New Westminster by October 15, 1999, within cost estimates.	• The division was amalgamated and the Vancouver and Burnaby offices were moved to New Westminster on October 1, 1999.	• The move was completed within cost estimates. Savings in rent will be approximately $70,000 a year.
• By November 30, 1999, complete a five-year computer systems plan, initiate a Treasury Board submission and, if approved, proceed with implementation.	• A two-year strategic information technology plan was completed in April 2000. A Treasury Board submission was drafted for presentation in May 2000.	• Treasury Board approval to implement the new system was received in May 2000.
• Introduce the new B.C. Safety Standards Act.	• A draft of the new B.C. Safety Standards Act was completed by March 31, 2000.	• Consultations on the proposed Act are ongoing. The minister plans to introduce the new B.C. Safety Standards Act in 2000/01.
• Draft consequential changes to related safety regulations.	• Drafting of safety regulations is expected over the next 18 months.	

SAFETY ENGINEERING SERVICES DIVISION

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Draft internal quality management standards (i.e., performance measures) by spring 2000.	• This project is ongoing.	• Safety Engineering Services' senior management met in April 2000 to discuss performance measures. It is expected that measures will be defined by October 2000.
• Complete a restructuring of the organizational framework for safety advisory committees.	• Work is ongoing to develop a standard terms of reference for the advisory committees. • The terms of reference for the new B.C. Safety Systems Advisory Council is being developed.	• Completion of the terms of reference is expected in 2000. • Appointment of members to the new B.C. Safety Systems Advisory Council is expected by September 2000.
• Develop basic models for risk assessment.	• This project has been incorporated into the larger redesign of Safety Engineering Services' business practices, to be completed over the next two years.	
• Complete an administrative services agreement between Safety Engineering Services Division and ministry Corporate Services.	• An agreement was completed for administrative, human resources, financial, and information systems services.	

Office of the Fire Commissioner

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Improve the application of fire safety legislation by:		
• continuing to review and update the Canadian Fire Investigation School Level 1 investigation course and manual,	• The Canadian Fire Investigation School Level 1 manual was completed and successfully piloted.	
• revising fire reporting training for local assistants and developing a new, one-day workshop,	• Local fire authorities can now submit fire loss reports electronically, through the office's website.	
• publishing bulletins, guidelines and consultative resources that help local assistants and police conduct fire investigations, and	• A vacancy in the Codes and Standards position has delayed the publication of bulletins and guidelines.	
• delivering fire investigation and inspection courses to local assistants and police.	• Seven fire investigation courses and 18 local assistant courses were delivered to 542 fire and police personnel and building officials.	

Office of the Fire Commissioner

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Continue to emphasize fire prevention by:		
· publishing a fire loss report that addresses the cause, circumstances and nature of each fire investigated,	• The annual fire loss report for 1997 was published.	• The Office of the Fire Commissioner has moved to an Internet-based fire reporting system that makes it easier for fire departments to provide information. The new system will improve the timeliness of fire loss reports.
· ensuring that the fire information and evaluation system remains up to date with information from fire reports submitted by local assistants,	• This work is ongoing.	
· participating in the national review of the Canadian Fire Loss Code structure for fire reporting and ensuring that changes are incorporated into the fire reporting manual, and	• The Canadian Fire Loss Code structure is in its final version. It is expected to be adopted nationally in July 2000.	
· coordinating public education initiatives.	• Eight hundred copies of the *Learn Not to Burn Program* brochure were distributed to 75 fire departments. The Juvenile Fire Setter Program continues to be widely accepted by communities.	
• In accordance with the *Emergency Program Act* and *Fire Services Act*, continue to plan for and respond to provincial emergencies and situations in which there is imminent and serious threat to life and property from fire.	• Operational guidelines were completed for the office's response to major disasters. • The office recommended to the Provincial Emergency Preparedness Program the adoption of a remuneration schedule for fire departments responding to provincial disasters. • A landfill fire in Delta was successfully dealt with, without loss to the community.	

CORPORATE SUPPORT

Corporate Services Department

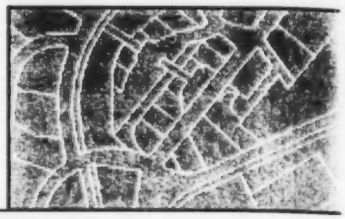
PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
Administration Branch		
• Complete business continuation plans for the ministry's regional offices, to ensure the timely resumption of essential services, programs and operations of the ministry in case of an emergency.	• Business continuation plans were completed for the regional offices of the Safety Engineering Services Division and the Office of the Fire Commissioner.	
Human Resources Branch		
• Design and deliver workshops on communications skills to ministry staff to raise awareness about diversity and improve the quality of workplace communications with designated group members.	• These workshops were not held in 1999/00. Job fairs aimed at designated group members were deemed a higher priority, so resources were shifted to that project.	• Although workshops were not held to discuss diversity, 117 employees received training in five sessions on preventing discrimination.
• Continue to improve the representation of designated groups in the ministry.	• Eleven women were hired in occupations where representation was less than 50 per cent.	• In one example, the ministry hired the first two women electrical inspectors to be employed by the province.
Information and Privacy Branch		
• Obtain Public Documents Committee approval of the Operational Records Classification System (ORCS) for the Safety Engineering Services Division, Library Services Branch, and the Local Government Department.	• The ORCS was approved for the Safety Engineering Services Division and the Library Services Branch in 1999/00. The ORCS for the Local Government Department was completed and is pending final approval.	• The Operational Records Classification system or ORCS establishes a classification and retention and disposition schedule for government operational records.
Information Systems Branch		
• Convert ministry desktops from PCs to the less costly NT Terminal Server/Winterm hardware environment.	• 120 clients and five servers were installed.	• A terminal server client is a smaller, less expensive computer (without hard-drive) that takes the place of the larger, individual PC.

Communications Branch

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Increase training and professional development opportunities for communications branch staff.	• Staff completed training in government financial management and control, speech and news release writing, media relations, emergency response communications, strategic communications, and issues management.	
• Work with Safety Engineering Services to raise awareness of the ministry's safety operations.	• The Communications Branch helped the Safety Engineering Services Division launch its website.	

Corporate Policy Branch

PERFORMANCE TARGET	RESULTS	COMMENTS
• Provide sound policy advice and deliver the support necessary to make the ministry's *Municipal Act* reform initiative successful, from both the government's and the clients' perspective.	• Participants evaluated the branch's symposia on reformed local government at an average of 3.9 on a scale of 1 to 5, in which 5 was ranked "excellent."	• The *Municipal Act* reform initiative has emphasized client consultation, the development of legislative principles, the framing of specific legislative initiatives, and the development of a plan for future-year legislation.
• Provide sound legislative advice and deliver the support necessary to make the ministry's annual legislative program successful, from both the government's and the clients' perspective. The immediate focus is the ministry's 1999 legislative agenda and preparations for the 2000 legislative session.	• An ambitious package of legislation was adopted in 1999 (eg., the *Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, 1999*). It accounted for 23 per cent of all legislation adopted by government in the 1999 session. • To help local governments understand the amendments made in the *Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, 1999*, the branch produced the resource manual, *Using the (Reformed) Municipal Act*. • The *Municipal Act* reform website was updated regularly during the year. • The ministry also had significant involvement in the *Budget Measures Implementation Act, 1999* and the *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Acts (No. 2 and No. 3)*.	• The *Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, 1999* is the second year of a three-year *Municipal Act* reform initiative. This legislative process has been based on extensive consultation and cooperation between the ministry, the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) and local governments. The UBCM has been directly involved in developing proposals recommending changes to the *Municipal Act* and it has co-hosted (with the ministry) three symposia on new local government legislation.
• Provide sound advice and contribute to the effective and efficient administration of ministry programs and government initiatives. These include the Ministry of Finance's Streamlining Initiative, implementing the Financing Local Government (FLG) Strategy, providing policy advice to B.C. Assessment, and providing on-line responses to the Union of B.C. Municipalities' (UBCM) resolutions.	• All required regulatory plans were updated and filed. • The ministry consulted with B.C. Assessment on a number of potential regulations required to implement the 2000 Assessment Roll. Seven regulations were processed and adopted by Cabinet. • Ninety-five responses to UBCM convention resolutions were added to the on-line UBCM Responses Database, bringing the total to 671 since 1992. • The 1999 disbursements for the Small Community Protection and Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing programs were calculated.	• The streamlining initiative is a government-wide program to ensure that B.C.'s regulatory environment is fair and efficient. • A status report on the FLG next steps was presented at the 1999 UBCM convention.



APPENDIX 2: EXPENDITURE OVERVIEW

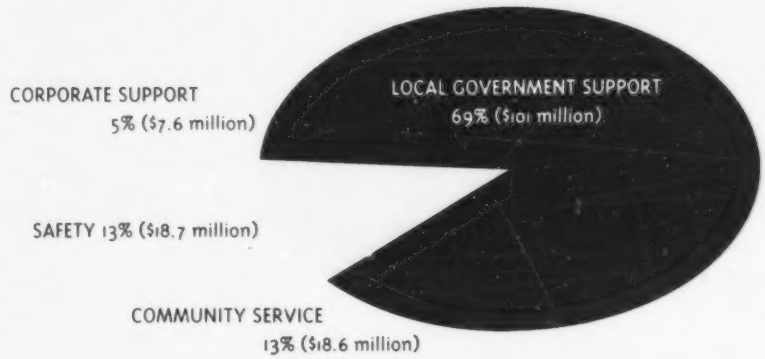
Total Operating Expenditures by Expenditure Type ($ millions)

	ACTUAL				BUDGET
Expenditure Type	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Salaries and Benefits	26.69	24.32	24.91	23.14	23.44
Operating Costs	10.16	10.05	8.66	8.90	7.94
Grants and Contributions	293.03	227.46	185.90	113.88	106.46
Total Expenditures	329.88	261.83	219.47	145.92	137.84
Capital purchases				0.27	0.48

Notes to the above table:

1. This table excludes the expenditures of the Ministry's University Endowment Lands Administration Special Account which is a flow-through of ratepayer contributions and matching expenditures for the ratepayers' portion of municipal service costs.
2. The "actual" figures are from the Public Accounts and adjusted for more relevant and consistent reporting. Reimbursements of ministry expenditures from third parties (i.e., recoveries) have been subtracted from the respective total expenditure figures.
3. The provincial government introduced capital budgeting for the 1999/2000 fiscal year. For prior years, asset acquisitions are included in "operating costs."

1999/00 Expenditures By Business Line



APPENDIX 3: CROWN CORPORATIONS, AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS REPORTING TO THE MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Assessment Authority of B.C.

Board of Examiners

Fire Safety Advisory Council

Electrical Safety Advisory Committee

Electrical Safety Appeal Board

Electrical Safety Board of Review

Electrical Wiring and Equipment Standards Committee

Elevating Devices Safety Advisory Committee

Elevating Devices Safety Appeal Board

Gas Safety Advisory Committee

Gas Safety Appeal Board

Islands Trust

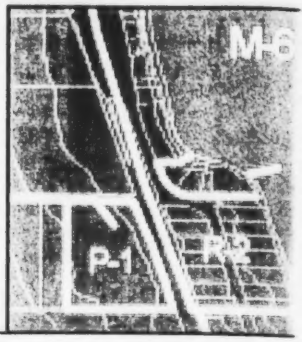
Islands Trust Fund Board

Power Engineers and Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety Advisory Committee

Power Engineers and Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety Appeal Board

Property Assessment Appeal Board

Property Assessment Review Panels



APPENDIX 4: LEGISLATION ADMINISTERED BY THE MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Local Government and Community Services

Assessment Act

Assessment Authority Act

Building Officials' Association Act

The Cultus Lake Park Act

Home Owner Grant Act

Islands Trust Act

Library Act

Library Foundation of British Columbia Act

Local Government Grants Act

Local Services Act

Manufactured Home Tax Act

Ministry of Municipal Affairs Act

Mountain Resort Associations Act

Municipal Act
Except:

- Division 2 of Part 15 — Police Services are the responsibility of the Ministry of Attorney General.
- Sections 692 and 693 — the B.C. Building Code is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security.

Municipal Aid Act

Municipal Finance Authority Act

Municipalities Enabling and Validating Act(s)

New Westminster Redevelopment Act, 1989

Resort Municipality of Whistler Act

Sechelt Indian Government District Enabling Act

- Section 4 only.

Sechelt Indian Government District Home Owner Grant Act

Tourist Accommodation (Assessment Relief) Act

University Endowment Land Act

- Except sections 1, 2(d) and 3(1)(b)

Safety

Electrical Safety Act

Elevating Devices Safety Act

Fire Services Act

Fireworks Act

Gas Safety Act

Ministry of Labour Act

- With respect to gas safety, electrical safety, elevating devices, and boiler and pressure vessels.

Power Engineers and Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety Act

Railway Act

- Sections 14 - 25, 28, 137, 139 - 149, 152 - 160, 163 - 170, 173 - 179, 185(3) - (4), 188, 192 - 196, 197(7) - (8), 245 - 252, 263, 264, and 266 - 281.

Private Acts

Vancouver Charter

Greater Nanaimo Water District Act

Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District Act

Greater Vancouver Water District Act

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